



**THE JOURNAL
OF
THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY**

Property of
Graduate Theological Union

APR 05 1991

**Volume 18, Number 1
Spring 1991
ISSN: 0263-0907**



THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition (Soto Zen). It is affiliated with Shasta Abbey whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. Shasta Abbey is the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and is located in Mount Shasta, California. The monks of Throssel Hole Priory are members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and follow the teaching and example of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett.

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THE JOURNAL OF THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is published quarterly and costs £7 per annum. Opinions expressed in the articles are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Abbot, Throssel Hole Priory, or the Editor.

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THE JOURNAL OF THE ORDER OF BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIVES is published quarterly by the O.B.C., Shasta Abbey, P.O. Box 199, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067. Subscription rates are \$23 surface, \$30 airmail and cheques should be sent to the Editor at the above address.

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PLEASE NOTE. We would like to clarify our use of the word 'He' when referring to the 'Eternal,' the 'Cosmic Buddha,' the 'Dharmakaya,' 'Avalokiteshwara Bodhisattva' etc. Whenever 'He' is used, understand that what is meant is 'He/She/It.' We simplify our usage in this way so that the continuity of the articles is not repeatedly broken up by the form 'He/She/It,' and also because we have not yet found another word which conveys the complete meaning.

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News from the Tiger's Lair



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'... and to the Source Kept True.' Part IX

Owing to the fact that Buddhism is comparatively new in Western countries, and the laws of these countries with regard to the rights and privileges of the individual not always being identical from one country to another, much misunderstanding as to what constitutes fair-play within those rights and privileges would appear to be rife in some places. In order to stay true to the source, I know that it is imperative for the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives not only to be true to the teachings of the great masters of whom I have already written, such as Bodhidharma and Bankei, but also to keep as true as possible to the spirit of the Vinaya which, for those who do not know of it, contains the laws governing the Sangha. In the Vinaya, there are those laws that are very obviously universal, and then there are those laws which need interpretation in the light of the laws of the land in which the Sangha finds itself, and those that need adaptation because it would be impossible to follow them, as they are, in the country in which one finds

oneself.

Before there are misunderstandings on this, the following is an example: One of the Vinaya rules states that monks are forbidden to dig the ground or have it dug for them.* In California, for reasons of earthquake safety, the building codes require considerable subsurface footing and foundation work before a building can be built. If the Vinaya were to be followed strictly in the matter of digging, no Buddhist religious buildings could be built in this State. Without buildings, at least in the northern parts of the State, no Buddhist practice could be done because of the cold winter climate. Here is another example: Dōgen Zenji came back to Japan and, in one of his writings, speaks glowingly of the toilet arrangements that he found in Sung China. He describes how toilets are dug and how each person who uses them has fourteen balls of clay for washing the hands and for use instead of toilet paper: we are speaking here of twelfth century arrangements. There was, when I was in Japan, a temple that still believed this should be done because Dōgen Zenji had said how wonderful it was. I have often thought that the authorities did not fully comprehend what Dōgen was trying to do; I am convinced that, if he were alive today, he would be investigating the very latest in plumbing for the building of his new monastery, and Kōhō Zenji, in Sōji-ji, was of the same opinion. It would be impossible, of course, to go to a local building inspector and ask permission to dig a pit, and virtually impossible to get enough balls of moist clay to use with it at the present time. One can only imagine the expression on the building inspector's face!

In keeping true to the source, therefore, the spirit of what was behind the rule has to be very carefully studied and, as a result of much thought and discussion with other members of the Sangha, adapted so as to be as close to the original as possible given the circumstances in which the Sangha finds itself. This has been done variably throughout the last 2,500 years. One can imagine the difficulties under which

Vinaya masters have laboured down the centuries in order to keep true to the source. Admittedly, I have spoken of some extreme and almost amusing problems that have obviously got to have something done about them in modern times. However, the laws made by governments are always changing and, whilst staying true to the source, Vinaya masters must do everything in their power both to stay within the laws of the land in which they find themselves, and to keep true to the source of Buddhism as it has been handed down to them through their line. To this end, in searching for appropriate precedents to guide our approach to monastic discipline, it is our policy to first adhere to the meaning of what is given in the fundamental scriptures of the Sōtō Zen Church to which our Order belongs (see this *Journal*, Vol. 1, nos. 2 & 3, Autumn-Winter 1986), and then to add to that precedents from other widely accepted Buddhist sources, both Mahayana and Theravada, which are not contradictory to those fundamental scriptures and which prove useful and wise to adopt. Keeping this in mind, we need to consider how to understand when a person is a Buddhist priest, and when he is not, both from the point of view of the old Vinaya rules and our own interpretation of them here in Shasta. What follows is the result of much research in the Vinaya concerning when a person is considered to have left the Sangha; it is also the rule we follow here with regard to people who have left us, as well as people who may have set up as priests on their own with no connection whatsoever to us, or any other Sangha, yet still state that they are my disciples. The following research was conducted for me by Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy.

1. In accordance with the Vinaya and with accepted Buddhist practice worldwide, any ordained member of the O.B.C. who takes on the appearance of a lay person and who lives the household life (as evidenced by marriage, secular employment, the setting up of a secular household, sexual relations, or failure to maintain contact with the Order) without making on-going arrangements with the Order according to the then current regulations of the Order for maintenance of posi-

on therein, shall be deemed by the Order to have returned to lay life, and to have resigned both from the B.C. and the Buddhist ordained Sangha generally.¹ Since such a person has set himself outside the governance of the Order and Sangha, and no disciplinary proceedings thereof are effective in regards to him or her,² a disciplinary hearing shall not be required in order to remove such a person's membership from the Order and Sangha, and a notation by the Head of the Order that such a condition has been found to exist shall suffice to effect his or her removal from both.³ Should any person so removed dispute his or her status at some future date, he or she shall be entitled to a full disciplinary hearing on this matter in the manner then currently prescribed by the Order⁴ but, having submitted to the governance of the Order and Sangha, such a person may be required by the Order to answer to any disciplinary accusations left unresolved at the time of his or her departure, or which may be occasioned by his or her conduct during the time between that departure and the reinstatement hearing.⁵ As the person who requests such a hearing is thereby asserting that he or she has never ceased being an ordained member of the Order or Sangha, or both, he or she may be held accountable to all applicable Order and Sangha rules regarding his or her behaviour during the absence.⁵ The Head of the Order shall be empowered to readmit such a person to the Order and Sangha without a hearing if it is judged to be advisable by the Head of the Order.⁶ A person readmitted without a hearing may also be held accountable to all applicable Order and Sangha regulations regarding his or her behavior before, at the time of, and during his or her absence.⁵ A person who does not contest that he or she has returned to lay life under this rule and who requests readmission to the Order may be dealt with as one who seeks reordination following a return to lay life,⁷ or as may be deemed appropriate by the Head of the Order given the particular circumstances.⁶

In accordance with the Vinaya and with accepted Buddhist practice worldwide, any ordained member of

the O.B.C. who sets himself or herself apart therefrom, whether by resignation,⁸ renunciation of discipleship,⁹ prolonged absence from the temples thereof,¹⁰ or refusal to accept the governance thereof,¹¹ and who continues to act as a Buddhist monk or priest or asserts that he or she is such without submitting himself or herself to a reinstatement hearing by the Order, shall be regarded by the Order as belonging to one of the three following categories:

A. If the person has joined, accepted a master in, or accepted the governance of another extant recognised branch of the Buddhist ordained Sangha, he or she shall be regarded as a member thereof and no longer a member of the O.B.C.¹² His or her behaviour shall no longer be the responsibility of the Order¹³ and any claims made by him or her, and/or his or her disciples, to membership therein, or to the Transmission lineage thereof, shall be held invalid.¹⁴ Should such a person seek readmission to the Order, he or she may be dealt with as one who seeks readmission to the novitiate thereof from another branch of Buddhism,¹⁵ or as may be deemed appropriate by the Head of the Order given the circumstances.¹⁶

B. If the person is a Transmitted monk and forms or joins a new Buddhist organization not already under the governance of another recognised branch of the ordained Sangha, when and if that new organization consists of five or more Transmitted or senior ordained members,¹⁶ that person shall be deemed to have created a schism in the Sangha.¹⁷ Such a person shall be regarded as no longer a member of the Order and, together with any disciples he or she may have, shall neither be regarded as having any legitimate claims thereon, nor any legitimate claims to the Transmission lineage thereof.¹⁸ If such a person seeks readmission to the Order, he or she may be dealt with as one who has caused, or has participated in, a schism in the

Sangha,¹⁹ or as may be deemed appropriate by the Head of the Order given the circumstances.⁶

C. If the person does not fit into either category 'A' or 'B' above, he or she shall be regarded as a 'masterless, or renegade monk' who has, in fact, returned to lay life although asserting membership in the Sangha.²⁰ Such a person shall be regarded as having no relationship to, nor claims on, the Order, and no ceremonies of ordination or Transmission conducted by such a person shall be recognised as valid by the Order (except for purposes of counting to determine if a schism has been created under paragraph 'B' above.)^{16 & 21} If such a person seeks readmission to the Order, he or she may be dealt with as one who seeks reordination following a return to lay life,⁷ or as may be deemed appropriate by the Head of the Order given the circumstances.⁶

In the unlikely event that, after the death of its Founder, Rev. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, the Order becomes corrupt to the point that it no longer adheres to one or more of its Four Founding Principles (which are: 1. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. 2. The Precepts. 3. The practice of Serene Reflection Meditation. 4. The teachings of its Founder.) and acts so as to prevent members from peaceably following any or all of those Principles, and refuses reasoned efforts at reform on this matter, then members who resign therefrom so that they may continue to practice peaceably the Four Founding Principles shall be considered as being in none of the above three categories²² and the Order shall be free to reunite with them and with their disciples at any time without imposition of penalties.²³

This is as true to the source as we can get it!

One should understand that such rules are written and adopted both for the safety of the public in general (who may become congregation members) and for the safety of the priestly Sangha itself. A very great monk once said, 'Any priest, if he would be regarded as safe to follow and a real teacher, should have someone superior to him at all times: if he becomes the Patriarch, he must follow the Precepts as minutely as if he were their very incarnation. If he does not do this, he is in grave spiritual danger.' Everybody has heard the old statement, 'Absolute power corrupts absolutely;' what I have written above is the Buddhist priesthood's equivalent of that. It is for this reason that I have taken so much trouble to keep in contact with those senior to me in the priesthood in both Malaysia and Japan. When I wrote *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom*, the first thing I did after writing it was submit its contents to the masters of Soji-ji. If one would stay true to the source, one must stay close to those others who are true to the source, and to set oneself up as one's own master is usually to cut oneself off from the source.

Notes

† I.B. Horner, trans., *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka)* [London: Pali Text Society, 1982], Volume II, pp. 223-24.

For anyone who wishes to check on the parts of the Vinaya quoted in this article, I write here the following volume numbers and pages:

References

Abbreviations used in these references:

BOD: *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka)*.
I.B. Horner trans. The Pali Text Society, London. In six volumes.

ETV: *The Entrance to the Vinaya (Vinayamukha)*.

Phra Vajiranavarorasa. Mahamakutarajavidyalaya, Bangkok. In three volumes.

PCB: *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*.
Holmes Welch. Harvard University Press, Cambridge. 1967.

SSR: *Regulations for the Standing of Religious Teachers and Priests of the Sōtō Shu*. Sōtō Shu Shumicho, Tokyo. 1985.

[In this article, the word 'Order' refers to the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church (O.B.C.), while the words 'ordained Sangha' refer to the Buddhist priesthood in general.]

1. BOD-1, pp. 45-46 (which provides that one who returns to the household life is no longer a member of the ordained Sangha).

ETV-III, pp. 237-240 (which provides for the same, and indicates that this may be inferred from clear bodily actions as well as from statements of resignation). PCB, p. 334 supports this.

2. ETV-I, pp. 27-28 (which indicates that one who no longer is a monk has placed himself outside of the governance of the Sangha and its procedures.

BOD-I, pp. 190-91, note 3 (which indicates that householders are not subject to the rules and procedures of the ordained Sangha.)

3. SSR, Ch. II, Sec. VIII, Articles 65 (#3) and 65.2 wherein the Head Office of the Sōtō Church is empowered to remove from the register of priests of the Church anyone who has returned to lay life, disappeared etc. on the basis of evidence thereof reported by the head of a temple).

Furthermore, it is contrary to logic to require that the Order apply disciplinary proceedings to remove a person who has already removed himself from both the Order and the jurisdiction of its procedures.

4. This permits such a person the full benefit of the procedures of the Order should he or she so request.

5. Thus, one who requests that the rules of the Order and of the Sangha be applied to him or her must reasonably expect that all of the rules thereof may be applied, not just some of them.

BOD-IV, pp. 126-27 (which allows for reinstatement of monks who have left the priesthood provided there are no outstanding disciplinary actions pending against them which they are unwilling to resolve).

6. This allows greater leniency and flexibility to be exercised when warranted, as is consistent with the Mahayana approach to the Vinaya. See, for example, 'The Definitive Vinaya,' in Chang G.C.C., ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūta Sūtra* (University Park, PA: Penn. State University Press, 1983), pp. 262-79.

7. ETV-I, p. 5 (which implies that monks may be re-ordained provided they did not commit an offense involving defeat when previously ordained.

PCB, p.334 indicates that reordination was possible in Chinese practice.

BOD-IV, pp. 126-27 (which provides for the possibility of such reordination provided there are no disciplinary offences for which the person has not made admission and amends).

8. BOD-I, pp. 45-46; ETV-III, 237-40 (which provides for resignation from the Sangha).

9. BOD-I, pp. 45-46; ETV-III, p. 237 (wherein disavowing one's teacher or Preceptor is a valid means of resignation from the Sangha).

10. SSR, Ch. II, Sec. VIII, Article 65, nos. 1 & 2 (which provides for the removal from the registry of priests or persons who have disappeared or whose whereabouts have been unknown for more than seven years).

ETV-I, p. 228 (where it is stated that no monk is permitted to function independently of the governance of some branch of the Sangha).

BOD-I, pp. 45-46 (which provides that one who disavows training, discipline, or the Vinaya has resigned from the Sangha).

SSR, Ch. II, Sec. II, Articles 27 & 27.2 (which provide that only a person who believes in the tenets of the Sōtō Church may be an ordained member thereof).

ETV-III, pp. 231-32 (wherein becoming a member of one branch of the Sangha implies breaking with one's former branch).

It is contrary to logic to expect the Order to be responsible for the conduct of one who has joined another branch of Buddhism and thereby removed himself from the governance of the Order.

SSR, Ch. II, Sec. VIII, Article 63 (which states that it is not possible for a Transmitted monk to take another master). It is general practice that when someone violates the spirit of discipleship and takes membership or discipleship in a new branch of Buddhism, he or she is regarded by their old branch as having nullified their connections of membership and lineage thereto. The strict maintenance of this principle was one of the primary reforms made by Manzan Dōhaku, after whom our lineage was named, in the Sōtō Zen Church in the 1600's. While multiple Transmissions are permitted in Chinese practice (PCB, pp. 160, 164, and 280), in that practice the Dharma Family may cancel a monk's Transmission at will for rule violations (PCB, p. 160).

The novitiate is the appropriate level of reinstatement since the act of changing branches of Buddhism has nullified any pre-existing Transmission. See above.

In Buddhist countries, a schism is only created when five or more monks who are already senior

leave an established branch of the Sangha. As people in such countries generally simply ignore as invalid any ordinations or Transmissions given by renegade monks, such monks are incapable of creating a 'schism after the fact' by ordaining and Transmitting enough monks to create their own branch of Buddhism. However, in Western lands such 'schisms after the fact' can be created, at least in appearance, because the populace is not primarily Buddhist and their lack of Buddhist sophistication creates muddled perceptions. While such 'schisms' are not true schisms under the Vinaya definitions, they can cause as much damage to popular faith as a true schism and we believe that it is appropriate in the West to deal with monks who create such apparent 'schisms' as if they had created or participated in a true schism as defined by the Vinaya.

17. BOD-V, pp. 286-87 (which defines a schism as being created when five or more senior priests act in separation from an existing Sangha community in matters of teaching, discipline, observance, practice, or ceremony.)
ETV-III, pp. 109-10 & 224-26 (which define schism in the same manner as above).
18. BOD-V, p. 288; BOD-IV, p. 113; ETV-III, p. 109 (which indicate that one who creates a schism in the Sangha thereby cuts all connections with the Sangha generally and is no longer a priest). Since such a person is no longer a priest, it follows logically that he or she cannot perform valid ordinations and, hence, that his or her disciples have no standing. Also, PCB, p. 160 indicates that in Chinese practice, the Transmission may be cancelled by the Dharma Family for Vinaya offences of which this is one of the most serious.
19. BOD-IV, p. 113, ETV-III, p. 109 (which provide that such a one may never be readmitted to the priesthood).
20. This is because such a person accepts the govern-

ance of no Sangha branch, which is an impossible condition and a cause for return to lay life, as noted in No. 11.

1. Since such a person is no longer a member of the ordained Sangha, these conditions follow logically.
2. They are not in category 'A' as they join no other branch of Buddhism. They are not in category 'B' as they adhere to truth and not falsehood in Dharma, discipline, and practice (BOD-V, pp. 286-87) and do not create a division in the Sangha because of their own views, opinions, and likings (ETV-III, p. 225).

They are not on category 'C' since they continue to accept the governance of those who truly follow the Four Founding Principles of our Order.

3. ETV-III, pp., 229-34 (which provides for the reunification of two factions of the Sangha without judgement of fault or penalty when their differences were not created by a schism in the true sense of the word.)

* * *

Mogallana and His Mother

Rev. Fuden Nessi, F.O.B.C.

There is a short Buddhist scripture, the *Ullambana Sutra* which is said to be the origin of the *Ceremony of Feeding the Hungry Ghosts*. In brief, the scripture relates the following:

Venerable Maudgalyayana (S: Mogallana), one of the Buddha's foremost disciples, wished to help his deceased parents. He had a vision in which he saw that his mother had fallen into the realm of the hungry ghosts. Being without food nor drink, she had become very thin. Mogallana immediately tried to give his mother food from his almsbowl. But as she tried to eat the food, it turned into charcoal. Filled with grief and in tears, Mogallana went to the Buddha to ask His help. The Buddha explained to Mogallana that his mother was in this woeful state because her past offenses had been very great. He also told him that his mother could not be saved through Mogallana's individual effort alone: what was needed was the power of merit of the whole Sangha. The Buddha then advised Mogallana to offer food and other requisites to all the members of the Sangha on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the day when the monks were observing their confession meeting. The Buddha added that if anyone makes such an offering to the monks, this person's parents, husband, wife and children will be delivered from the suffering in the lower realms of existence, and the deceased parents from that person's seven previous births will be reborn in the heavenly realm. Mogallana followed the Buddha's advice, and his mother was delivered from suffering in the state of a hungry ghost.

This story illustrates some very important points of teaching. If we look at the story in detail and heed what it says, we can get a better understanding of our own circumstances in training, which will help

to make the right choices.

Mogallana's mother has fallen into the realm of the hungry ghosts due to her past severe breakages of the precepts:

According to Buddhist belief, beings fall into the state of a hungry ghost because their deeds of greed have been very serious. The story tells us that Mogallana's mother tried to hide the food with her left hand when Mogallana offered her his almsbowl, so that the other hungry ghosts could not share the food with her. This attitude was probably what had caused her to fall into this pitiful state. It is said that when the hungry ghost tries to eat food, it immediately turns into charcoal; when he or she tries to drink water, it turns into fire. That which is nourishing and thirst-quenching is turned into something which burns, into suffering. One can look at this on many different levels. The important thing to understand is that through grasping and attachments we turn that which helps, sustains, and nourishes us into its opposite, into something destructive. One simple example of this is what often happens in human relationships; how it is that by demanding and insisting on being loved we turn a friendship which could help and advance us on the Way into something which hinders. Grasping and demanding make it impossible for us to recognise the offerings freely given to us, or to be spiritually nourished by them. Thus Mogallana's mother could not benefit from Mogallana's offering of food.

The hungry ghost is not apart from the Buddha nature. If we can look at suffering, or at beings in a pronounced state of suffering, without judgement these can become Bodhisattvas for us. They illustrate in a direct and visible way how the law of cause and effect works, the essence of which is compassion. They also teach us the urgent need to find the heart of compassion in ourselves. Great Master Dogen says that when we look at others with a pure heart, compassion is aroused naturally within us. This means to look in

stillness, without being run around by what arises and passes away in our mind, or by habits of defilement. Judgementalism is one such defilement. Only from the place of stillness can we have a real understanding of suffering, including our own. When we look without sentimentalism or judgement and see it is ignorance, fear, and subsequent attachments which have led a particular person to adopt a grasping attitude in life and make misguided choices, we know sympathy for that person. We recognize confusion and grasping all too well from our own experience of it. We find sympathy when we do not allow ourselves to become entangled with what comes and goes in our mind. When we know sympathy we also know something about the Oneness between ourselves and others: this strengthens our wish to do good for all beings.

Although Mogallana offers food to his deceased mother, she cannot receive it because of the state she is in at the time:

This must have been very grievous for Mogallana. The scripture relates that he rushed to the Buddha in tears. Mogallana is very human. Training does not make us cold and unfeeling! What training does is to help us learn not to identify totally with the feelings, for if we do this we will base our actions on feelings rather than on the Buddha within. So grief still arises, and we accordingly feel sad; but this does not prevent us from taking refuge in the Buddha and acting from this, nor are the feelings perceived as being outside of the refuge.

Not to be able to give comfort and help when we very much wish to is difficult and disturbing, as it must have been for Mogallana. If we are prepared, though, to make the effort to be still within disturbance, we are able to see the teaching in the situation we are in. Mogallana's particular situation contains an important teaching: the difficult realisation that we cannot change others' suffering and circumstances as we would wish to induces us to find a deeper place of faith. It teaches us acceptance of the law of cause

and effect which is so important to develop in training, and of another universal law: that the universe is not answerable to one's personal will. It is important to realise that we cannot do other peoples' training for them. Only they themselves can do their training, and carry their own karma. And it is of course important to always stay concerned for others, and to offer help and support whenever possible. The two, the acceptance of karma and the concern for others, have to harmonise in this way.

All-acceptance has little to do with intellectual understanding. Instead, it comes out of true faith and a surrendering of ourselves. This step in training is often what enables us to see that compassion is at the heart of the workings of the law of karma. Far from being a sort of passive resignation, it is often what deepens our concern and care for others. Having faith in the Unborn always leads to that which is good.

Mogallana, deeply caring for his mother and struck with grief because of her plight, rushes to the Buddha to ask His help and guidance. He is sad and sorrowful, but he does not succumb to despair because of his mother's situation; neither does he doubt the value of training because he is unable to help her by his own efforts; nor does he doubt the Buddha and His teaching. What he does instead is to go for refuge to the Buddha.

How often do we start to give in to doubt or to despair when confronted with suffering, or when we fail in our efforts in training! A monk once said we have to learn to use that which causes us to look down as a means for looking up and taking refuge in the Buddha. This is not easy and has to be cultivated by grasping the right will in training. If we keep making this effort, the Buddha does point us deeper. Similarly, in the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Scripture* it says we should not become distressed because of what causes us to look down, but instead give rise to greater zeal in training and devotion to the Buddha.

Mogallana thus takes the suffering to the true refuge, the Buddha.

The Buddha tells Mogallana his mother could not be saved through his individual effort alone. He says that what is needed is the meritorious and miraculous power of the whole Sangha:

The deepest giving there is, the greatest offering we can make, is to take refuge in the Unborn and to live in this place. This offering is far greater than anything we might achieve through our own personal efforts. The Unborn is the source of all merit.

Taking refuge in the Unborn on the deepest level means to give up everything. This entails giving up relying solely on our efforts. This does not mean that our individual effort is not valid or important. It means that we have to cease clinging to what we achieve, and instead place our heart and refuge in the Buddha. When we do not put our effort into the hands of that which is greater than us, the Eternal, it will never be enough; if we believe and insist that it should be enough, then we become attached to the outcome of our efforts—this inevitably leads us to despair. This kind of attachment is clearly illustrated in situations where we believe that a person's spiritual well-being and progress depend entirely on our personal help.

When we listen in the stillness of the heart, we sometimes find that the giving which is asked of us has a different (often a much humbler) form than what we had conceived. It can be quite simply: Have faith. Keep training yourself. It takes faith to trust that we are truly giving when there is nothing at all we can do personally to reach or help a particular person except by continuing to train ourselves as best as we can, and by remaining concerned for that person. By following the teaching, the still small Voice, in this way, we find peace even in the midst of disturbance and grief. And peace within the heart leads to generosity of spirit and giving.

The Buddha tells Mogallana to make offerings to the Three Treasures for the sake of his deceased mother:

As we begin to abandon attachment to ourselves and follow the still small Voice instead, we see ways in which we can give of ourselves in training. The offering of training takes many different forms, according to circumstances. Thus the Buddha advises Mogallana to give food and other requisites to the Sangha, which is to honour the Three Treasures.

When one deeply trains oneself and with faith offers oneself in training, one honours the Light of Buddha. This Light shines brightly for all beings, and is the source of merit. Great Master Dōgen says that if we entrust and commit ourselves to the Buddha Way, we (our offering, in whatever form it may take at a particular time) will be complete.

When the Buddha tells Mogallana that if someone makes a true offering to the Three Treasures for the sake of his present parents, relatives, and the deceased parents of the seven previous births, these will be delivered from suffering in the three lower realms, we should not think that this individual has saved these beings. Rather, it is the merit of the Three Treasures which is always helping and saving all beings. Our work is to continue to give in training, because this is the right thing to do, and to give homage to the Three Treasures out of gratitude.

Following the Buddha Way continuously is the only true way of fulfilling our filial piety.

Great Master Dōgen.

Notes

The Ullambana Sutra, trans. Upasaka Neoh Shin Yung, ed. Upasaka Khoo Poh Kong (Kulim Buddhist Society).

* * *

JOURNAL NOTICE

Until now the Journal has had to use the built-in dot-matrix printer supplied with our Amstrad PCW8512 to print its documents. This is because of the limitations of the Locoscript 1 program. Print quality has been variable and at times quite poor. We have now gone over to Locoscript 2 which promotes us to another league altogether. It means a wide range of laser and daisy-wheel printers can now be used to give the Journal a professional-quality print. This will of course greatly improve the legibility and appearance of the journal. It will also mean we will be able to print important publicity and other material to a much higher quality.

As long as a printer can be physically connected to the PCW8512 via an appropriate serial/parallel interface with the correct cabling, and Locoscript 2 set up for the correct Printer Files (surely someone out there must understand this!), it will print the Journal. Ideally, the Character Set associated with the Printer File should be able to print *macrons*, e.g. *ō*, but this is not absolutely essential.

If there is anyone who may be able to help us acquire a new printer, would they please contact us first before sending anything. The Journal editor has a list of compatible printers (albeit compiled in July 1987) and other information which prospective donors may need to know.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and hope you find the Journal useful and interesting. Your articles, comments, and suggestions are always welcome.

Journal Editor.

A Buddhist Guide to Children's Games & Activities

We need to revise the publication, 'A Buddhist's Guide to Children's Games and Activities.' This on-going project, which has the Priory's support and encouragement, is to share the experience of training with children; We are asking once again for your help.

As before, we are interested in anything you have found particularly helpful in explaining the teaching to children. This might include books, games, poems, songs, and other activities. Music and simple recipes with a Buddhist theme would also be welcome, as would non-competitive games which have been tested and which all participants enjoyed.

Budding authors are encouraged to write short stories. We would be especially grateful for suggestions or activities which children have themselves taken part in and enjoyed. All recommended book titles will be read by at least two other Buddhists and, if suitable, will be included in the booklet with a short review and outline of the story.

If anyone is unsure about what would be good to include, there is an excellent article in the current booklet by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett called 'Challenging Karma' which may prove helpful.

If you feel you can help with this project, please contact one of the co-ordinators:

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* * *

A Respectful Conversation With Myself

Rev. Zenshō Roberson, M.O.B.C.

[This article was first published in *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Volume 5, Number 3. It appears here with the kind permission of the author.]

What do you know for certain?

If you would be true, you must go alone. You must give up everything.

What is going alone?

It is not the same as stubborn-minded individualism, and you must have the strength to follow your convictions. It is not just going against what everyone else does, deliberately making it so you stand out in a crowd, or away from a crowd. When Dōgen was on pilgrimage in China, before he found Great Master Tendō Nyōjō, a priest asked him why he came, wasn't he just following the crowd? Dōgen replied that he didn't see why he should not follow the crowd if the crowd led him to where he could find the Truth.' To go alone is to take responsibility for yourself. You make the choices, accept the consequences for what you do, and learn from them. In many ways, to go alone is to think deeply and carefully about what you do, and to act thoughtfully.

What is giving up everything?

Quite literally, giving up everything. 'Giving up' is letting go of, it is not entirely the same as throwing away. 'Everything' is not limited to what you own, or to those opinions or attachments you know about, or to those things you think are the selfish 'you.' Maleness, femaleness; comfort, discomfort; health, weakness; loneliness, social life; spiritual

experiences, delusion; sanity, fear.....innumerable things arise and must be properly attended to without attachment. 'Everything' is limitless, and 'everything' may be contained in one simple belief or assumption that is the keystone of the kōan.

How do you give up everything?

You meditate wholeheartedly. You develop an active understanding of the keeping of the Precepts. You examine your life in detail. You work at being consistent in your training. Giving up everything is not based on a few dramatic gestures. It grows from, and is, entering daily life with the right intent and willingness every day.

These things are the hull, rudder, and motor of my training. Everyday life is the sea. Faith in the Three Treasures is the pilot. My Master, who is the real Shakyamuni Buddha, is the Light.

* * *

Notes

1. See Takashi James Kōdera, *Dōgen's Formative Years in China* (Boulder, Colorado; Prajñā Press, 1980), p. 50. My interpretation of this conversation differs from the author's.

* * *

Groups Weekend: Nov. 23-25 1990

[We are extremely grateful to *Rawdon Goodier* for sending us a full and detailed account of last year's Groups Weekend. The following report is an edited version of this account.]

Forty-four members from nineteen of our affiliated meditation groups attended last year's Groups Weekend at the Priory. As in previous years the days began and ended with morning and evening meditation. The rest of the time was devoted to group discussions and plenary sessions (the main topic of this report), classes, and much-valued informal meetings between participants.

Friday evening: November 23

Rev. Master Daishin welcomed everyone to the weekend and was very pleased so many had been able to attend. He stressed the need to see an evolution in the discussions at the annual meetings in order to avoid going over the same ground. Therefore, there were some issues--though important ones for groups--that would not receive much attention this weekend. These included the format of group meetings, how to lead discussions and introduce newcomers, advertising events etc. We were encouraged to discuss these issues informally amongst ourselves during the weekend. He went on to say there is a need to be clear about what these weekends are trying to achieve. At a usual weekend retreat talking and informal social contact are appropriately minimised, but the Groups Weekend explores another important facet of practice: namely, to foster and develop the important relationship between members of the Sangha, a relationship rooted in trust. At first one mainly relies on external guidance in one's training; but one must go deeper and learn to ask inwardly for guidance and to trust one's own vision and capacity while always being willing to

take refuge in the Sangha.

Rev. Master Daishin explained how the Sangha as a whole works. It is a mistake to view the Sangha as a hierarchy and assume the monks dictate to the Lay Sangha what they should do. There must always be a willingness to follow the Master's teaching. (Such willingness is absolutely fundamental; without the kind of humility it implies, it is very difficult to get anywhere on the spiritual path.) However, in order for the Sangha to work as a real Sangha each of us has to develop responsibility for ourselves and, through this, realise we all have a responsibility for the whole as well. The relationship within the Sangha is both **vertical**—between you and the teacher, or you and the Priory; and also **horizontal**—that is, between all its members. To make this a reality, there has to be participation and sharing at all levels within the Sangha. In a meditation group we must look to the group as a whole. We must be responsible collectively to look at what the group needs, and begin to provide for that need. This is the responsibility of all group members and as groups mature this is in fact happening.

The monastic community is confident that the Lay Sangha has the ability to develop and mature and it is important that this is allowed to happen. He emphasised the need for us to relax and be at ease with each other, to trust our abilities, and not panic if things go a bit off-track at times as the group develops. The session ended with Rev. Master Daishin saying there needs to be a mutual setting of pace between the Priory and Lay Sangha. Both have an essential contribution to make.

The weekend programme offered two options: presenting and setting up an altar. There was also meditation instruction and fund-raising; individuals nominated from each meditation group attended these options.

Saturday: November 24

On Saturday morning, Rev. Master Daishin explored some of the main issues raised by the responses to the questionnaire:

Meditation instruction: Up to now the Priory did not want to restrict group practice regarding meditation instruction. But now that many groups are well established, it was felt appropriate that, in order to safeguard group members, only those who have received formal training in how to give meditation instruction from senior monks at the Priory be authorised to do so. He added that such training would not normally be given to group members with less than two years' meditation experience within the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition.

Starting New Groups: A higher standard of group practice with support from the monastic community should be the aim. With this in mind, it was proposed that there should be a two-stage process in the establishment of formally affiliated groups. The first stage would involve groups whose members met and meditated together but who would not constitute a formally affiliated group. The second stage of formal affiliation and listing would come once the group included a Lay Minister, or Lay Minister in training, and had members authorised by the Priory to give meditation instruction.

How Groups Function As Groups: Regarding the functioning of a group, we need to cultivate an openness to the promptings of the Eternal. The model should be the way the monastic Sangha has always done business. In other words, meditation groups should try to operate on the basis of consensus—silence being taken as consent. This is the traditional Buddhist way of taking a collective decision. However, a decision made in this way does not imply infallibility and, when it is good, refuge needs to be taken both vertically and horizontally. Although present-day society is dominated by confrontational strategies, groups should avoid this approach to decision-making. There needs to be great patience and respect exercised

within the group in seeking a consensus before the expedient of a majority decision is adopted.

Friendship Among Group Members: Different levels of friendship have developed in different groups. But, within training, spiritual friendship is the one which counts. The primary allegiance within the group should be to training. Amateur psychology should be avoided. Problems may be raised in groups to which there is no immediate answer, but where sympathetic listening can help. Group members need to trust themselves and each other.

Visitors To Groups: Visitors to meditation groups from other Buddhist traditions should be made welcome; but if they come regularly it should be assumed they are then following the group's practice. When invited, group members should feel free to attend other traditions' festivals etc. while taking care not to give credence to unacceptable practices by doing so. (For example, discrimination against women.) As long as those who attend such festivals are well grounded in their practice, there need be no fear of compromising one's commitment.

Fund-raising: Rev. Master Daishin thanked the Lay Sangha for its continued support: donations from the congregation remain the Priory's main source of income. He said we are fortunate to live at a time when the Sangha can live close to the traditional Buddhist way. If the monastic community is to continue to grow and provide spiritual support for the lay congregation, the dependence on donations must be kept in mind. At present, outside retreats (where the monk's expenses, hire of premises etc. have all to be covered) bring a much smaller return to the Priory than retreats held there. Fund-raising display boards are being made available to groups to assist with fund-raising; but they should be used with discretion. So far as group finances are concerned, papers describing particular groups' experiences had been prepared and copies were distributed. Advice on group publicity by Peter Lavin was also available.

Organization Of Outside Events: The guidelines for organizing outside retreats have been revised. Forms are for 'reservations' rather than 'applications' and instead of retreat 'rules' there are now 'guidelines.' The forms have been simplified and a distinction made between one-day and weekend retreats. Further thought needs to be given to making outside events accessible to the disabled.

Communications With the Head of the Order: If congregation members are ever seriously worried about the way the Priory is run, the rules of the O.B.C. provide a procedure for consulting with a Standing Committee of senior members of the Order at Shasta Abbey. The rules also contain advice on how to proceed in such circumstances.

In addition, there is provision for the election of two members of the congregation of each Priory who may communicate directly with the Head of the Order, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, and with whom the Head of the Order may communicate on matters of concern. Normally, the procedure is to consult with the Standing Committee, but in emergencies (including illness or accident) direct communication with the Head of the Order is possible.

It was agreed that Dave Hurcombe and Karen Richards be elected for this purpose. Please note that these arrangements are not meant to discourage people from writing to Rev. Master Jiyu whenever they wish.

Other Matters: Some groups have been contacted by a Japanese institution (Hanazano College) which is undertaking an inventory of world Zen centres and organizations. The names of some of our groups have been listed. A general response to this enquiry will be made on behalf of the O.B.C. by Shasta Abbey so there is no need for individual groups to respond.

In the concluding plenary session, the timing and location of Congregation Day and the next Groups Week-

end was considered. Congregation Day was tentatively fixed for the weekend September 13-15, 1991. The place will be arranged by the Lay Sangha. So that more people can attend Congregation Day it was decided to hold it in the North one year, and in the South the next. Congregation Day 1991 will be in the North.

In view of Rev. Master Daishin's proposed visit to Shasta Abbey in Autumn 1991, the next Groups Weekend will take place in March 1992. As a further questionnaire would not be circulated before then, meditation groups were advised to consult amongst themselves in preparing topics for the small group discussions which are such a valued part of a Groups Weekend. Because of the wish to have representatives from as many of our groups as possible attend the weekend, next year it may be necessary to restrict attendance from any one group to two members. This need not restrict initial applications, provided people understand that attendance from any one group may need to be pruned back if the weekend was otherwise overbooked.

Rev. Master Daishin brought the discussions to an end by emphasising how useful the weekend had been. Many good ideas had been put forward and the sense of community among the Sangha as a whole reinforced.

* * *

The Groups Weekend: A Personal Response

Diane Sellers

The Groups Weekend last November was the first discussion weekend I have attended. All of the groups had received a letter from Rev. Master Daishin asking members to think about certain questions. An article in the Journal described it as 'an extremely important occasion...one of the most useful ways for the Priory to keep in touch with the congregation; we need this direct feedback to ensure we are responding effectively to the needs of our lay members.' I had heard about previous groups weekends and had taken part in discussions with members of the meditation group. Many of the issues raised in our group seemed to have been dealt with previously. There was an unvoiced suspicion lurking in my brain that the monks at the Priory knew it all anyway and I did not, that any 'differences of opinion' I had were because I was not meditating hard enough! I knew the weekend would be different from those I had experienced before, although I didn't know quite how.

On arrival, I discovered that the structure of the weekend was to be very informal. There were the usual meditation periods and ceremonies, but the spaces in between were for discussions, talks, and workshops. Mealtimes were informal and an opportunity to continue talking with fellow trainees. The comparative absence of forms and the presence of choice triggered a stream of uncomfortable thoughts, forcing me to look within: 'Who would I sit next to? What would I talk about? Would expressing an opinion break the harmony of the Sangha? My speaking out would make it obvious to others how I break the Precepts although I might not see it myself. What did I have to say that was of any value anyway?' The noise in my head seemed endless.

The teaching of the weekend gently and firmly encouraged me to look at the way I am with other people.

brought sharply into focus what it is to be with others. My dance between the opposites of pride and inadequacy when I'm with others felt clumsy and ludicrous; it was not something I wanted to do. The words spoke to mould myself around others' opinions, too frightened to express my own, felt empty. Paradoxically, behind this accommodating persona I was subtly putting off others through criticism and judgement. To be with another person without pride, judgement, expectation, or self-criticism is a great challenge for me.

It sometimes feels as if I carry within myself a collection of sharp knives set in a wheel which can rotate at high speed. Self-criticism and condemnation set this wheel in motion--judgements fuel it further, causing it to spin faster, impeding my potentiality to realise the Truth.

'I'll kill myself before I give you an opportunity to do so.'

Meditation has made me aware of this wheel, the hum of its idling motor, the incredible suffering it can give rise to when I choose to set it in motion.

The weekend directly challenged my view that I had no useful ideas to offer. I was surprised when some of my thoughts were expressed by others. These were listened to, acknowledged, and change was brought about.

Something Rev. Master Daishin's talks directly challenged was the idea that lay trainees needed to be contained with a 'big stick.' If I was trusted by the monks who 'knew,' how could I not trust myself? This was exemplified for me in the changes brought to the rather formidable 'Rules for Outside Retreats' that had previously been recommended by the Priory. Rev. Master Daishin suggested the need to change and soften these, as well as to omit others. Other suggestions or changes were made and discussed by the participants and these were included in the new 'Guidelines.'

Training together is not to insist on certain codes of behaviour from others before they can begin to meditate or be part of the meditation group; training together is learning to trust.

He went on to say it was also important to remember that Buddhist teaching in this country was still in its infancy, and things were necessarily evolving and changing.

At the end of the weekend, I could see more of what it means to be part of a meditation group, and what an important aspect of the teaching it is. Taking refuge in the Sangha means a multitude of things I am only just beginning to conceive of. I want to take up the challenge to trust and allow myself to be with a group of people training together in the best way they know how. I don't want to insist on harmony or, more usually, avoiding disharmony in the Sangha; I don't want to insist that things should be this way or that way or, again more usually, say there is nothing I can do to make things better; and simply withdraw. Just to be still with others is what I want.

I thank the Buddhas and Ancestors for the myriad forms in which the teaching is shown to me. And for the countless opportunities I have to train.

*Homage to the Buddha,
Homage to the Dharma,
Homage to the Sangha.*

* * *

Dependent Origination

Rev. Kōshin Schomberg, M.O.E.C.

[The following article was first published in the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Volume 5, Number 2]

8. The Rolling Wheel of Becoming.

Many centuries ago, Buddhist monks in India analysed Dependent Origination in great detail. The books of the *Abhidhamma* (the section of the Pali Canon dealing with philosophical analysis and exposition of the teachings) contain hundreds of pages devoted to this exposition. While specialised purposes of advanced training can well be served by study of analyses, contemplative Buddhist practice places emphasis on immediate and intuitive realisation of the spiritual truths embodied in the teaching of Dependent Origination. In this article, I would like to briefly discuss the way in which Dependent Origination comes to be intuitively understood.

One of the limitations of analysis is that, as one becomes increasingly involved in it, one also tends to increasingly 'lose sight of the wood for the trees.'

The spiritual purpose of the teaching of Dependent Origination is to help beings free themselves from the wheel of birth and death. If we want to 'see the wood,' we must bear this purpose in mind.

The teaching of Dependent Origination embodies the most practical of all religious teachings. We suffer; our volitional actions are causally related to our suffering; we would like to free ourselves from suffering; we therefore must change our actions. We can do any amount of intellectual study of the Buddha's teachings, but unless we have come to a point in our lives when our fundamental responsibility for our own suffering is being positively accepted, the teachings will remain

spiritually impenetrable.

This taking of responsibility is called 'raising the Mind that seeks the Way.' It is important to understand clearly what this acceptance of responsibility is and what it is not.

For years Rev. Master has spoken of the importance of 'just doing one's own training.' For years I would hear this and somehow not hear it fully. After some big mistakes, I finally heard it. To 'just do one's own training' is to accept that it does not fundamentally matter how our suffering originated, who did what to whom in the past, or what might happen in the future. What does matter is that, in this present moment, I can choose to act on the basis of past greed, hate, and delusion, or act with the mind of meditation. If I am careless of my present exercise of volition, I will perpetuate suffering; and this will involve both self and others. The point here is the simple necessity of putting the brakes on the rolling wheel of birth and death by not carrying forward, through present action, the causes of suffering from the past.'

This acceptance of responsibility is not guilt. Guilt is self-blame based on clinging to the past. Nor is it callousness: to 'just do one's own training' is the only firm foundation for compassion; it is not a callous lack of compassion. In Buddhism, the primary way we can do good for others is by not doing that which drives (or entices) others further into delusion than they already are. The wheel of sorrow is easy to start and hard to stop. Those who know this are mindful of their own attitudes and actions and the effects they may have on others.

The individual steps in the teaching of Dependent Origination, and the relations among these steps, are the 'trees' of our proverbial metaphor. The 'wood' is the rolling of the wheel of sorrow and the great spiritual need to do whatever is required to stop it. One can approach the 'wood' by examining the 'trees,' as we have been doing in this series; we can also glimpse the

meaning of individual 'trees' in being aware of the 'woods' as a whole. Many of the most profound truths are seldom apprehended with clarity. More often, they are intuitively² known; and, as our training continues, we sometimes sense that our understanding of them is deepening even though we may seem to be light-years from even a single lucid thought about them. In just going about our daily meditation and training, we are more or less unconsciously working constantly on stopping the rolling of the wheel of becoming. And in the natural course of events, the process sometimes highlights for a while various crucial aspects of causality. At these times, we have insight into individual steps or the relations among various steps (or both) of the teaching of Dependent Origination. But most of the time, we live with a more subtle 'back-burner' awareness of the rolling wheel of suffering, cause and effect, the wise and unwise employment of volition, the inexorability of consequence, the transitory character of existence, and so on.

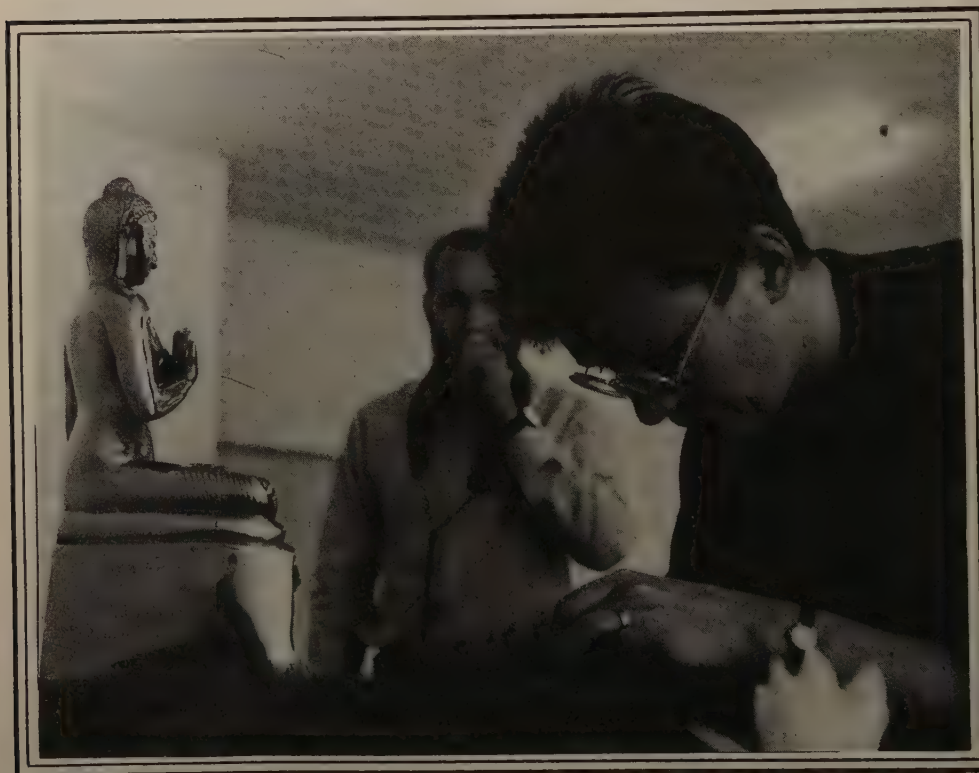
The fact that something is not clearly perceived intellectually is no proof that it is not practically understood. Since the point of Buddhism is the cessation of suffering,³ anyone who is moving through training in the direction of cessation is—whether he or she knows it or not—manifesting some level of understanding of the teaching of Dependent Origination. In the same way, a fluent speaker of English manifests understanding of the language when speaking even though his grasp of grammatical theory may be negligible. It may be very helpful to study grammar at some point, just as it can be helpful to the trainee to study Dependent Origination. But anyone who has halfheartedly studied a foreign language knows how easy it is to learn all the rules and remain unable to carry on a simple spoken conversation. So in Buddhism what really matters is the doing of training in ordinary daily life.

In the next article in this series, we will look at Dependent Origination in ways which reveal the main features of relatedness among the various steps of the teaching.

Notes

1. For a detailed explanation of the Precepts in this light of responsibility, please see Great Master Keizan and Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, 'Kyōjukaimon and Commentary' in *An Introduction to the Tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation [Sōtō Zen]* (Mt Shasta, California; Shasta Abbey Press, 1989).
2. The word 'intuitive' here is used to indicate the 'knowing with one's blood and bones' which is also what is meant by faith.
3. The Third Noble Truth of the Buddha. Synonymous with Nirvana, the Eternal, Buddha Nature etc.

* * *



*Preparing the altar for a Guildford Day meeting:
Diane Sellers & Stephen Close.*

News

Monastic News: Rev. Aylwin Nissen received the Transmission from Rev. Master Daishin Morgan on February 7. On February 21, Rev. Raymond McGowan was successful in the performance of his *Head Novice's Dharma Ceremony*; Rev. Adelin Bryceson has taken over from Rev. Mildred Läser as the Head Novice's assistant. We congratulate these monks and wish them every success in their training.

Festivals & Ceremonies: We celebrated the *Festival of the Buddha's Enlightenment* on December 25, after which about thirty lay guests came for the *New Year's Retreat*, December 29 to January 4. The *Secular New Year's Ceremony* commenced just before midnight on December 31.

We began the New Year on January 1 with the *Festival of Maitreya Buddha* (The Buddha That Is to Come). This was followed on January 4 by the *Festival Memorial for Great Master Seck Kim Seng*, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett's ordination master.

The *Festival of the Buddha's Death* [Parinirvana] took place on the evening of February 15 and on February 21 we celebrated the *Festival of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva*. 'Samantabhadra' means 'Universal Virtue' or 'Full of Virtue.' Part of the offertory recited at the end of the ceremony is as follows:

'....The Bodhisattva of the greatest achievement, Samantabhadra, with His multitude of vows so vast and boundless, rides the six-tusked elephant with great dignity; with wisdom does He manifest Himself in the Seven-Jewelled Lotus. All the serenities of His Samādhi are invariably, sovereignly free: from the very beginning His wonderful virtues are all perfect and complete. He comes augustly to assist in the salvation of the

world we live in: His supernatural responses and powers shake the great universe. Blessed be the One who lives on Omei Mountain, the silver-coloured world, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva of greatest achievement.'

Forthcoming Festivals & Ceremonies

April 21: *Festival of Great Master Keizan.*
Keizan is called in Japan 'the Mother of Sōtō Zen' (Dōgen being the Father.)

May 5: *Festival of the Buddha's Birth [Wesak]*

June 2: *Sunday Lotus Ceremony.*

June 16: *Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva*
(the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion).

New Kitchen—Work Begins: For the last two weeks, a mechanical digger has been clearing the site and preparing the ground for the foundations; we hope to have these in place by Jūkai. We have so far received about £15,000 in donations, covenants, and pledges of support and estimate the whole project will cost at least £80,000. So we urgently need your help if the work is to continue throughout the summer. Please help if you can.

The building work will be done largely by members of the community. As our regular work still has to go on, this puts quite a strain on the monks. Any offers of practical help, either with the building or other work, will be greatly appreciated. *Dave Hurcombe* is organising monthly work-days on the Saturday before the first Sunday of the month (the day we have the usual Lotus Ceremony or Buddhist Festival). If you would like to take part, please contact him at this number: 091.265.1404.

Phoning the Priory: We would like to remind people of the new guidelines for phoning the Priory on business

matters. Such calls should be made Tuesday to Saturday during the following hours: 9.30am - 12.30am and 2.30pm - 5.30pm. Calls for emergency spiritual counselling may be made at any time.

Special Project: The refurbishing of the ceremony hall is progressing extremely well. The frieze above the altar has been redesigned, painted, and gold-leaved; the altar has a beautiful new purple backdrop and lotus flowers; the brightly-decorated 'heavenly canopy' is in place over the Celebrant's bowing seat; and the two side screens are nearly complete. But now the present front altar looks a little forlorn. And so we have a special project to offer anyone with cabinet making experience. As the new building is well under way, we cannot spare the time to make a new front altar ourselves. If there is anyone who would be interested in making the altar for us (at home), please get in touch with the Priory.

Talks & Retreats: During the last three months, public talks and retreats have been held in Edinburgh, Telford, Holland, Norwich, Huddersfield, & Newcastle. Monks have also attended meditation group meetings in Liverpool, Cardiff, Birmingham, and Huddersfield.

North Western Groups Retreat: Paul Taylor reports: On Saturday February 16, the first joint retreat organised by the north-western groups affiliated to the Priory was held at the Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre. Thirty people attended from Huddersfield, Lancaster, Liverpool, Manchester, and Stoke-on-Trent. Rev. Edmund Cluett led the retreat which was mainly for lay trainees with an established meditation practice. His talk focused on the subtleties in practising right effort as our training deepens. Training together with others following the same tradition was very rewarding, showing in a beautiful and obvious way the importance of the Sangha refuge. Three older children of group members joined us for morning and midday services. The video film 'Morning Service at Throssel Hole Priory' was screened after lunch for those who had not yet seen it. We hope this will be

the first of many such events where we, as members of neighbouring meditation groups, can meet and practise together.

Donations: We are most grateful for these recent donations: a stone Buddha head, brass offering plate and stand, lighter fuel, a vase, and fabric; various books, stamps, a slide projector, 35mm camera, and a fax machine; toothpaste & toothbrushes, soap; cat and dog treats; sundry tools, curtains, door-closers, a stainless-steel sink, collapsible chair, and a gas fire; seeds, kitchen items, work boots, 'handy foam'; gloves and socks; packing material for the Bookshop; and a collection of specially made ceramic bowl and cup sets for the monks.

The Kitchen wishes to thank those who have recently donated fruit and vegetables; seeds, dates, nuts & raisins; baked beans, bread, butter, biscuits, and bulgur wheat; tea, coffee, marmalade, jam, and honey; mince pies, custard, cakes, flapjacks, and sweets; milk, eggs, cheese; tofu & tempeh.

May we take this opportunity to thank all those who have kindly donated wooden chairs for the ceremony hall. These chairs are to replace the plastic ones we have been using for some years. They have upholstered seats and come complete with holders for the liturgy books.

If anyone would like to donate one of these chairs, perhaps in memory of a friend or relation, would they please contact the Bursar. They cost approx. £64.

Begging Bowl: The Kitchen is in need of an electric coffee-maker, a large pressure cooker (24pts. or more), and a commercial-size kitchen mop-and-bucket, preferably one with a squeeze-handle attached to the bucket. The Bookshop can always use packing material, especially plastic 'bubble paper' and cardboard mailing tubes. We also need two Paterson negative files (ring-binder type) for 35mm negs.

* * *

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